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ABSTRACT

In October 1999, Auburn University, Montgomery (AUM) used its own professional telephone-survey unit, Alabama Voice, to call students, 517 in all, who were first-time undergraduates in fall 1998, but did not return to school in fall 1999. Telephone conversations were held with 300 of these students, and information was obtained from parents or guardians about an additional 76. The remaining 141 could not be reached. Survey responses provided good approximations of the number of nonreturning students who enrolled elsewhere, where they enrolled, and why they did not return to AUM, regardless of whether they did or did not enroll elsewhere. In general, most of the reasons students did not return to AUM were things over which AUM has no control. The telephone survey results were then supplemented with a comparison of the characteristics of the nonreturning and the returning students. The two groups were compared by gender, ethnicity, AUM school, high school, class level, and age. The survey instrument, data collection method, and results should be of particular interest to institutional researchers at other urban universities. Attachments contain a proposal for the study, the survey protocol, a discussion of the methodology, a list of transfer schools, and a report on the supplemental analysis: (SLD)

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Tracking Down Nonreturning Students at an Urban University: Method and Results

ED 475 733

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Abstract

In October 1999 Auburn University Montgomery used its own professional telephone-survey unit, Alabama Voice, to call students, 517 in all, who were first-time undergraduates at AUM Fall 1998 and did not return to AUM Fall 1999. We reached 300 of these students directly, and obtained some information about an additional 76 from a guardian or acquaintance. The remaining 141 could not be reached.

Survey responses provided good approximations of the number of nonreturning students who enrolled elsewhere, where they enrolled, and why they didn't return to AUM, regardless of whether they did or did not enroll elsewhere. In general, most of the reasons students did not return to AUM were things over which AUM has no control.

The telephone-survey results were then supplemented with a comparison of the characteristics of the nonreturning and the returning students. The two groups were compared by gender, ethnicity, AUM school, high school, class level, and age.

The survey instrument, data-collection method, and results obtained should be of particular interest to institutional researchers at other urban universities.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to find out why students who enroll at AUM do not return and, if they transfer elsewhere, where they go. To find the answers to these questions, we decided to call every student who was enrolled at AUM for the first time Fall 1998, and was eligible to return Fall 1999, but did not. There were 517 of these students.

While the concept of telephoning students to ask if they are enrolled at another college and why they didn't return to your college is simple, actually doing so requires planning and persistence.

Instrument Design and Data-Collection Method

AUM's Director of Institutional Studies drafted a preliminary version of the telephone-survey questionnaire and circulated the initial draft to selected professional staff members for suggested revisions. Based on these suggestions, the questionnaire was revised and given to the director of Alabama Voice along with a proposed study design. (Alabama Voice is a self-supporting research center housed within AUM's School of Business. Alabama Voice is equipped and staffed to conduct telephone interviews, as well as provide a variety of business-consulting and data-gathering services.) Using the proposed study design and draft telephone questionnaire, the director of Alabama Voice prepared the short, formal "Proposal for Marketing Research," included as Attachment A. The Director of Institutional Studies accepted this proposal, and Alabama Voice's coordinator then suggested final revisions to the questionnaire and modified the format to better

facilitate interviewing and data entry. The final version of the questionnaire is included as Attachment B.

AUM's Assistant Director of Institutional Studies extracted from our student information system the names and phone numbers of the 517 students who were to be called and provided this information to Alabama Voice. At the same time, she also extracted student demographics, admission status, major, credit hours completed, GPA, ACT, high school, and transfer school, if any. These data were later entered along with the survey responses, so no telephone time had to be spent asking students for information already available in our student information system.

Calling began on October 15, 1999, and concluded on October 30, 1999. Attachment C written by Alabama Voice's Coordinator, describes in detail the extensive effort made to reach each of the 517 students:

Calls were made from 5:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on weekdays and from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays....Working numbers were called a minimum of three different days. If the student could no longer be reached at the phone number on the student record, a forwarding number was requested....In cases where there was no phone number listed in the student record, the phone number listed had been disconnected, or was the wrong number, a search for a current phone number was done using various Internet search engines such as the Internet "Ultimate White Pages," the Montgomery phone book, and long distance directory assistance when probable location of the student could be ascertained.

If after repeated attempts, a student could not be reached, but the student's guardian or someone else who knew the student could be reached, that person was asked to provide answers to as many of the questions on the first page of the questionnaire as possible.

Guardians and acquaintances were not asked to respond to question 6, which asks the student to identify which of 21 reasons influenced his

or her decision not to return to AUM. All responses were coded to indicate if the respondent was the student, a guardian, or an acquaintance.

Persistence allowed us to reach 300 students directly, and obtain some information about an additional 76 from a guardian or acquaintance. The remaining 141 could not be reached.

Findings

SPSS was used to analyze the responses to the telephone survey. While responses were cross-tabulated with various student characteristics (gender, age, race, GPA, credit-hours completed, etc.), the results presented here indicate only whether the nonreturning students (1) did or did not enroll elsewhere, (2) if they did enroll elsewhere, where they enrolled, and (3) regardless of whether or not they enrolled elsewhere, the reasons why they did not return to AUM. More detail than this is not likely to be of general interest.

Of the 517 students, survey responses revealed that 153 (29.6%) enrolled at another college or university, and 191 (36.9%) did not enroll anywhere else. What the remaining 173 (33.5%) did could not be determined. Of the nonreturning students whose whereabouts was found, the following table shows the schools that received three or more of these students. Attachment D shows all the schools that received these students.

Number of Transfer Students from AUM Fall 1999	
Auburn University	26
Troy State University - Montgomery	24
University of Alabama - Tuscaloosa	11
University of Alabama - Birmingham	9
Troy State University	9
Southern Union State Community College	7
Alabama State University	6
John Patterson Technical School	3
University of South Alabama	3
Central Alabama Community College	3

It's interesting to note from Attachment D that a total of 30 AUM students transferred to a community college or technical school in Alabama, including Southern Union State Community College, John Patterson Technical School, and Central Alabama Community College shown in the table above.

Of the 300 students and 76 guardians or acquaintances whom we were able to reach, 325 gave a main reason for the student not returning to AUM. These reasons were grouped in the 20 categories listed in the table on the following page.

Reason	Number	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1. Work/Finances/Better financial aid elsewhere	77	23.7	23.7
2. Transient student/Has BA or BS/ Taking classes of interest	47	14.5	38.2
3. Intended to transfer/Wanted major or sport AUM did not offer	31	9.5	47.7
4. Had baby/Pregnant/Marriage/ Family responsibilities	29	8.9	56.6
5. Moved/Was transferred/ Family moved	25	7.7	64.3
6. Classes inconvenient/ More convenient elsewhere	14	4.3	68.6
7. Didn't like school/Undecided about future/Wanted time off	14	4.3	72.9
8. Wanted to leave home or Montgomery/ Wanted to go where friends are	14	4.3	77.2
9. Personal/Medical reasons	14	4.3	81.5
10. Did not like AUM/Did not fit in/ Couldn't make friends	13	4.0	85.5
11. Need to care for parent/ Family emergency	9	2.8	88.3
12. Poor/Declining academic performance	8	2.5	90.8
13. Dissatisfied with faculty or staff	6	1.8	92.6
14. Too late to register	5	1.5	94.2
15. Wants AA degree or tech training/ Doesn't need more schooling	4	1.2	95.4
16. Too far away/Going to school at home	4	1.2	96.6
17. Lacked college atmosphere/ No student life	3	.9	97.5
18. Had difficulty/Courses too hard/ Didn't get help needed	3	.9	98.5
19. Work responsibilities/Travel schedule	3	.9	99.4
20. Enlisted in Army or Air Force	2	.6	100.0
Total	325	100.0	

The percent of times each reason was given showed that there was relatively little dissatisfaction regarding the quality of AUM's academic programs, services, and social environment. While reasons 6, 10, 13, 17 and 18 have to do with things that students found lacking at AUM, only 11.9 percent of students who did not return to AUM did so for one of these reasons, indicating that none of the reasons appears to be a serious problem requiring a significant reallocation of resources. The lion's share of main reasons, 88.1 percent, given for not returning have to do with students' personal circumstances and preferences regarding college, i.e., things over which AUM has no control.

6. Classes inconvenient/More convenient elsewhere	4.3%
10. Did not like AUM/Did not fit in/Couldn't make friends	4.0%
13. Dissatisfied with faculty or staff	1.8%
17. Lacked college atmosphere/No student life	.9%
18. Had difficulty/Courses too hard/Didn't get help needed	.9%
	<u>11.9%</u>

Students who responded to the telephone survey were asked this question:

In addition to the reason(s) you just gave me, I'm going to read you a list of about twenty typical reasons why students do not return to a college or university they have attended. For each reason, please tell me if you agree or disagree that the reason influenced your decision not to return to AUM this quarter. And if the reason does not apply to you, just tell me.

The table on the following page shows the number who responded "agree" or "disagree" for each reason and the percentage who agreed that the reason influenced their decision not to return to AUM.

	Number of Students Who Responded Agree or Disagree	Percent Who Agreed Reason Influenced Decision Not to Return
A. I moved, and AUM is too far away for me to attend classes.	209	27.8
B. With my work schedule, I did not have the time to take classes.	227	30.4
C. When I enrolled at AUM I planned to transfer after one year.	234	29.9
D. I did not find the faculty at AUM friendly and helpful.	263	12.5
E. I have family responsibilities that keep me from attending school right now.	243	32.9
F. I was dissatisfied with the teaching at AUM.	263	12.2
G. I did not enroll this term due to financial concerns.	255	33.3
H. I was dissatisfied with the advising at AUM.	258	15.1
I. I found the courses at AUM too difficult.	267	11.2
J. I did not find the staff at AUM friendly and helpful.	264	11.4
K. I wanted to attend a school that was farther away from home.	246	20.3
L. I was dissatisfied with the social life at AUM.	238	19.7
M. AUM did not offer the major I wanted.	259	16.2
N. I was not able to get adequate child care.	198	3.5
O. The students at AUM were not friendly.	264	4.5
P. I was dissatisfied with the housing available at AUM.	177	7.3
Q. The courses at AUM were not challenging enough for me.	267	2.2
R. I was dissatisfied with the student services at AUM.	247	8.1
S. I want to work full time right now.	246	47.6
T. There aren't enough interesting things to do at AUM outside the classroom.	234	23.5
U. AUM is too far away from my friends, family, or both.	248	16.5

Here again the percentages of "agree" responses indicate that the primary influences on students' decision not to return to AUM were things that have to do with students' personal circumstances and performances. Work schedule (Reason B - 30.4%), family responsibilities (Reason E - 32.9%), financial concerns (Reason G - 33.3%), wanting to work full-time (Reason S - 47.6%), original intention to transfer (Reason C - 29.9%), and having moved too far away (Reason A - 27.8%) were all reasons with relatively strong influence, but not reasons over which AUM has control.

Most of the reasons that reflect on the quality of teaching, advising, student services, and campus life had relatively weak influence: (faculty not friendly and helpful (Reason D - 12.5%), dissatisfied with teaching (Reason F - 12.2%), dissatisfied with advising (Reason H - 15.1%), courses too difficult (Reason I - 11.2%), staff not friendly and helpful (Reason J - 11.4%), dissatisfied with social life at AUM (Reason L - 19.7%), students at AUM were not friendly (Reason O - 4.5%), dissatisfied with AUM housing (Reason P - 7.3%), courses not challenging enough (Reason Q - 2.2%), dissatisfied with student services (Reason R - 8.1%), and not enough interesting things to do outside the classroom (Reason T - 23.5%). This is not to say that there is no room for improvement in the quality of AUM's teaching, advising, student services, and campus life. However, the overall picture indicates that the dominant reasons students do not return have to do with things over which AUM has no control. This is an important finding because it allows AUM to avoid expending time, energy, and dollars to make changes that are not necessary and not

likely to have any effect on increasing retention. At the same time, the results of the survey allow AUM to estimate the number of new students who will not return and to use this estimate in enrollment and budget planning.

Supplemental Analysis

The telephone survey results were supplemented with a comparison of the characteristics of the nonreturning and the returning students. The two groups were compared by gender, ethnicity, AUM school, high school, class level, ACT score, and age. Detailed results of those comparisons were documented in one of a series of research briefs prepared by AUM's Assistant Director of Institutional Studies and distributed to senior administrators and selected mid-level managers.

The report examines all the undergraduate students who began classes at AUM for the first time during fall 1998. For reporting purposes these students were divided into two groups, those who returned to AUM for the fall 1999 term (n=633) and those who did not (n=517, the ones we called). The first two pages and one of the detailed tables of the 27 page research brief are included as Attachment E to exemplify the kind of information contained in the brief.

Lessons for Institutional Researchers

The following lessons learned from the collection and analysis of data on nonreturning students should be helpful to other institutional researchers.

- With planning and persistence a substantial proportion of nonreturning students can be tracked down.
- Guardians and acquaintances can provide useful information about students.
- If demographic and academic information can be obtained from a student information system, there is no need to spend telephone time asking for this information.
- A number of nonreturning students originally enrolled at a four-year urban university are likely to enroll at a community college or technical school, rather than another four-year college or university.
- To the degree that other urban universities are similar to AUM, the primary reasons students do not return are related to their personal circumstances and preferences, not to things over which the university has control.

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PROPOSAL FOR MARKETING RESEARCH

The Alabama Voice (AV), research unit of the Auburn University Montgomery School of Business (AUM-SB), and the Office of Institutional Studies at Auburn University Montgomery (AUM-IS) hereby consent to enter into an agreement for marketing research as outlined below.

In order to obtain valid information, Alabama Voice strongly recommends interviewing only the students, not surrogate respondents. However, if all of the following attempts are unsuccessful in locating a student, an effort will be made to interview one of the student's parents, and the parents' interviews will coded to allow analysis separate from the interviews of students.

I. Description of Services Provided by the Alabama Voice

- A. All personnel (interviewers, supervisors, data entry technicians) working on this project will sign a FERPA confidentiality statement.
- B. Conduct a telephone survey of AUM students who were enrolled Fall 1998 and not enrolled Fall 1999 regarding reasons for not returning. The data collection process will include:

Questionnaire

- 1. Review the survey questionnaire and suggest revisions/procedure where appropriate.
- 2. Type the questionnaire in a format suitable for interviewing and data entry with precoded responses.
- 3. Make the necessary number of copies of the questionnaire.

Interviewing

- 4. Telephone every name where a phone number exists.
 - a) If the student no longer resides at the location of the phone number provided, AV will request a forwarding number.
 - b) If there is no phone number in the student record, if the number is no longer in service, or if no forwarding number for the student can be obtained, AV will attempt to find a current phone number through the internet or by calling directory assistance in order to interview the student.
 - c) AV will attempt to complete an interview with every student for whom there is a working phone number during the allotted calling time frame.
 - d) Each working number will be called a minimum of three different days.
 - e) Due to uncertainty about the quantity of working phone numbers, it is not possible to predict precisely how many interviews will be completed.
- 5. AV will provide information on the result of attempts to reach each student with a telephone number.
- 6. Telephone interviews will not exceed ten minutes.
- 7. Telephone interviews will be designed to protect the integrity of the research and the parties involved.
- 8. Methodology will utilize standard survey research practices using the Alabama Voice telephone bank as a central location and interviewing under conditions of constant monitoring.

C. Data Entry

1. The entry form will be designed using the SPSS Data Entry II program.
2. In addition to responses to questions, the 15 student data items will be entered.
3. Data entry will be done by experienced data entry technicians.
4. Supervisors will verify data entry 100%.
5. AV will provide a complete list of response codes.
6. AV will provide 3.5 floppy diskette(s) containing raw data in SPSS format.
7. AV will provide a typed list of verbatim responses to each open-ended question, without any attempt to categorize them.

II. Description of Services Provided by Office of Institutional Studies

- A. Provide list of names and phone numbers of students (approximately 518) to be called for this survey.
- B. Provide one student record per page with the SSN suppressed, if possible.

III. Time Table for Completion of Marketing Research Services

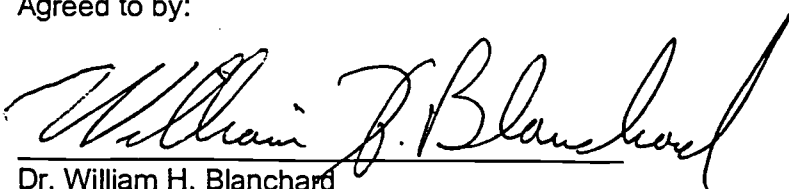
The services listed above will be completed by November 1, 1999, provided that the following time table is met so that actual interviewing can begin no later than October 15, 1999.

- A. AV receives notification of approval to conduct the survey by October 13, 1999, in order to finalize the questionnaire and make the needed copies.
- B. Final approval of the coded questionnaire is obtained by October 14, 1999.
- C. Names and telephone numbers of the students to be called are provided in the proper format by October 14, 1999.
- D. Delays in the time table above will result in a proportionately later completion date.

IV. Charges for Marketing Research Services

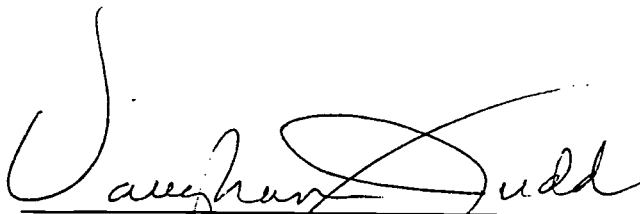
- A. The charge for the above services is \$6,500.00.
- B. Upon completion of the project, AV will submit a request for an internal transfer of funds.

Agreed to by:



Dr. William H. Blanchard
Director, Institutional Studies
Auburn University Montgomery

10/12/99
Date



Dr. Vaughan C. Judd
Director, Alabama Voice
Auburn University Montgomery

10/8/99

Date



Linda G. Mitchell
Coordinator, Alabama Voice
Auburn University Montgomery

10/8/99

Date

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Project #99012

Case # _____

Result # _____

SURVEY COMPLETED BY:

Interviewer # _____

-1 Student (Name) _____

Phone # _____

-2 Guardian (Name) _____

DE/ Verify _____

Relationship to student _____

Time Began: _____	Time Ended: _____	Length: _____
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INTRODUCTION: Hello, this is _____ calling from Auburn University Montgomery.

- **MAY I PLEASE SPEAK TO (Student Name) ?**
- **IF STUDENT IS NOT AVAILABLE, ARRANGE A CONVENIENT TIME TO CALL BACK.**
- **IF STUDENT CAN NO LONGER BE REACHED AT THAT PHONE NUMBER, REQUEST A FORWARDING PHONE NUMBER (and if they can suggest the best time to call).**

When Student is on the phone: [This is _____ calling from Auburn University Montgomery.] We're calling students who attended AUM last fall, but did not register for classes this fall. Would you be willing to answer a few questions about your [Student Name('s)] educational plans? The questions will just take about three or four minutes. Thank you!

1. Are you [Is Student Name] currently enrolled at a college or university? (**MARK ONLY ONE ANSWER.**)
 - 1 () Yes **CONTINUE**
 - 2 () No **SKIP TO Q.3**
 - 3 () Don't Know/ Not Sure (**DON'T READ**) **SKIP TO Q.3**
 - 4 () Refused (**DON'T READ**) **SKIP TO Q.3**
2. Where are you [is s/he] enrolled?

Name of college/university _____ Location (city/state) _____

-98 () Don't Know/ Not Sure (**DON'T READ**) -99 () Refused (**DON'T READ**)
3. Do you [Does Student Name] plan to return to AUM?
 - 1 () Yes **CONTINUE**
 - 2 () No **SKIP TO Q.5**
 - 3 () Undecided (**DON'T READ**) **SKIP TO Q.5**
 - 4 () Refused (**DON'T READ**) **SKIP TO Q.5**
4. When do you [does s/he] plan to return? (**MARK ONLY ONE ANSWER.**)
 - 1 () Winter quarter 2000 (January 2000)
 - 2 () Spring quarter 2000 (March 2000)
 - 3 () Summer quarter 2000 (June 2000)
 - 4 () Fall quarter 2000 (September 2000)
 - 5 () Sometime after Fall quarter 2000 (January 2001 or after)
 - 6 () Don't Know/ Not Sure (**DON'T READ**)
 - 7 () Refused (**DON'T READ**)
5. Please tell me the main reason or reasons you [Student Name] did not return to AUM this term. (**RECORD REASON(S) VERBATIM.**)

(IF GUARDIAN IS RESPONDING, SKIP TO Q.7)

6. In addition to the reason(s) you just gave me, I'm going to read you a list of about twenty typical reasons why students do not return to a college or university they have attended. For each reason, please tell me if you agree or disagree that the reason influenced your decision not to return to AUM this quarter. And if the reason does not apply to you, just tell me. (PLACE AN "X" IN THE APPROPRIATE BLANK.)

	Agree	Disagree	Not Applicable	Refused
A. I moved, and AUM is too far away for me to attend classes.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
B. With my work schedule, I did not have the time to take classes.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
C. When I enrolled at AUM I planned to transfer after one year.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
D. I did not find the faculty at AUM friendly and helpful.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
E. I have family responsibilities that keep me from attending school right now.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
F. I was dissatisfied with the teaching at AUM.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
G. I did not enroll this term due to financial concerns.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
H. I was dissatisfied with the advising at AUM.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
I. I found the courses at AUM too difficult.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
J. I did not find the staff at AUM friendly and helpful.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
K. I wanted to attend a school that was farther away from home.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
L. I was dissatisfied with the social life at AUM.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
M. AUM did not offer the major I wanted.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
N. I was not able to get adequate child care.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
O. The students at AUM were not friendly.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
P. I was dissatisfied with the housing available at AUM.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Q. The courses at AUM were not challenging enough for me.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
R. I was dissatisfied with the student services at AUM.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
S. I want to work full time right now.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
T. There aren't enough interesting things to do at AUM outside the classroom.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
U. AUM is too far away from my friends, family, or both.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

7. Are there any other reasons you [Student Name] did not enroll at AUM this term, or would you like to expand on any of the reasons you gave earlier? (RECORD RESPONSE(S) VERBATIM.)

IF STUDENT PLANS TO RETURN TO AUM:

8. Would you like for someone to call you [Student Name] or send you (him/her) information about returning to AUM?

-1 () No

-2 () Yes, call (specify phone #) _____

-3 () Yes, send info (specify address) _____

THOSE ARE ALL THE QUESTIONS I HAVE. THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME!

STUDENT RETENTION SURVEY RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Banner system was used to develop a list of all the students who were enrolled at AUM for the first time Fall Quarter 1998 and did not return Fall Quarter 1999. The group did not include those students who had graduated from AUM, those regularly admitted students who were suspended, those Prelude and provisionally admitted students who were not admitted to AUM, or those students who enrolled at AUM before Fall Quarter 1998. There were 517 students who met the qualifications for the survey population.

Attempts were made to reach each of the 517 students by telephone to complete a short (three to four minutes) survey regarding the individual's educational plans and reasons for not returning to AUM. Telephone interviews were conducted from October 15, 1999, through October 30, 1999, every day except Sunday. Calls were made from 5:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on weekdays and from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays. Telephone interviews were conducted by experienced interviewers specifically trained to administer the survey questionnaire.

Most of the student records contained at least one telephone number. Working phone numbers were called a minimum of three different days. If the student could no longer be reached at the phone number on the student record, a forwarding number was requested. If it was impossible to obtain a forwarding number, the interviewer left a message for the student and asked them to call the Alabama Voice office to complete the survey¹. A minimum of five days was allowed for the student to return the call. Beginning on October 26, 1999, the numbers where messages had been left for students were called again to determine if the student had received the message and if the student would be willing to participate in the survey. In cases where it was unlikely that it would be possible to contact the student, the survey was completed with the guardian.

In cases where there was no phone number listed in the student record, the phone number listed had been disconnected or was the wrong number, a search for a current phone number was done using various Internet search engines such as the Internet "Ultimate White Pages," the Montgomery phone book, and long distance directory assistance when the probable location of the student could be ascertained. Numbers which did not answer for four consecutive days were also researched in this manner. In some cases, the person answering the phone was not eligible to participate in the survey, but was able to provide some information concerning the student. Such information was included in the results and was coded to indicate that it had been provided by a surrogate.

¹ Only one student called back.

Transfer School: Where Nonreturning Students Enrolled

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Did not enroll elsewhere	191	36.9	55.5	55.5
	Auburn University	26	5.0	7.6	63.1
	Troy State University - Montgomery	24	4.6	7.0	70.1
	University of Alabama	11	2.1	3.2	73.3
	University of Alabama - Birmingham	9	1.7	2.6	75.9
	Troy State University	9	1.7	2.6	78.5
	Southern Union State Community College - Opelika, AL	7	1.4	2.0	80.5
	Alabama State University	6	1.2	1.7	82.3
	John Patterson Technical School - Montgomery, AL	3	.6	.9	83.1
	University of South Alabama - Mobile	3	.6	.9	84.0
	Central Alabama Community College - Alex City, AL	3	.6	.9	84.9
	Faulkner University - Montgomery	2	.4	.6	85.5
	Huntingdon College - Montgomery	2	.4	.6	86.0
	Stillman College - Tuscaloosa	2	.4	.6	86.6
	Chattahoochee Valley Community College - Phenix City, AL	2	.4	.6	87.2
	Prince Institute - Montgomery, AL	2	.4	.6	87.8
	Baptist Radiology Tech School - Montgomery, AL	2	.4	.6	88.4
	Wallace Community College - Dothan, AL	2	.4	.6	89.0
	Troy State University - Dothan, AL	2	.4	.6	89.5
	University of North Alabama - Florence, AL	2	.4	.6	90.1
	University of Alabama - Huntsville	1	.2	.3	90.4
	Athens State University - Athens, AL	1	.2	.3	90.7
	Wallace Community College - Selma, AL	1	.2	.3	91.0
	New Jersey City - Jersey City, NJ	1	.2	.3	91.3
	Trenholm State Technical College-Montgomery, AL	1	.2	.3	91.6
	Muskingum College-New Concrd, OH	1	.2	.3	91.9
	Jefferson State-Birmingham,AL	1	.2	.3	92.2
	Tuskegee Veterinary School-Tuskegee,AL	1	.2	.3	92.4
	University of Georgia-Atlanta,GA	1	.2	.3	92.7
	Wallace Community College-Hanceville,AL	1	.2	.3	93.0

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	University of West Alabama-Livingston,AL	1	.2	.3	93.3
	Jacksonville State-Jacksonville,AL	1	.2	.3	93.6
	Tidewater College-Virginia Beach,VA	1	.2	.3	93.9
	Jeff Davis Community College-Brewton,AL	1	.2	.3	94.2
	Central Alabama Community College-Childersburg,AL	1	.2	.3	94.5
	Tennessee State University-Nashville,TN	1	.2	.3	94.8
	Shelton StateCommunity College-Tuscaloosa,AL	1	.2	.3	95.1
	Full Sail World Education-Winter Park,FL	1	.2	.3	95.3
	University of Texas-San Antonio,TX	1	.2	.3	95.6
	St. Petersburg Junior College-Tampa,FL	1	.2	.3	95.9
	Alabama Southern Community College-Monroeville,AL	1	.2	.3	96.2
	Springhill College-Mobile,AL	1	.2	.3	96.5
	Brigham Young University-Provo,UT	1	.2	.3	96.8
	Midlands Technical College-Columbia,SC	1	.2	.3	97.1
	Troy State University-Pensacola,FL	1	.2	.3	97.4
	Faulkner State_Bay Minette,AL	1	.2	.3	97.7
	Pensacola Junior College-Pensacola,FL	1	.2	.3	98.0
	Valencia Community College-Orlando,FL	1	.2	.3	98.3
	Brevard Community College-Melbourne,FL	1	.2	.3	98.5
	Mississippi County Community College-Blytheville,AR	1	.2	.3	98.8
	Front Range Community College-Longmont,CO	1	.2	.3	99.1
	Air University-Maxwell AFB,AL	1	.2	.3	99.4
	University of Delaware-Newark,DE	1	.2	.3	99.7
	Student's father would not disclose	1	.2	.3	100.0
	Total	344	66.5	100.0	
Missing	No Response	173	33.5		
Total		517	100.0		

Auburn University Montgomery
Office of Institutional Studies
Research Brief

**Comparison of Returning and Nonreturning Students
 Whose First Term was Fall 1998**

RR 99-25

December 17, 1999

The following report examines undergraduate credit-taking students who began classes at AUM for the first time during fall 1998. This includes, among others, first time freshmen, transfer students, and provisional students. For reporting purposes these students are divided into two groups, those who returned to AUM for the fall 1999 term and those who did not. A further breakdown by admittance type is provided, for example, freshman and transfer. Comparisons for these two groups are provided for gender, ethnicity, school, high school, classification, ACT score, and age.

Table 1

As shown in Table 1, of the 1,246 undergraduate credit-taking students whose first time at AUM was the fall of 1998, 12 had graduated by fall 1999 and 84 were not permitted to return for the fall of 1999. Of the 84 not permitted to return, 58 were provisional students and 26 were on academic suspension. These students are broken down by admittance type. Admittance type is a classification that the student receives upon admittance to AUM; it is what the student "came to AUM as." Note that provisional students are presented as special students. The remaining 1,150 students are those who were eligible to return for their second fall semester. The following tables examine this group.

Table 2

Table 2 shows that of these 1,150 students, 633 (55%) returned to AUM for the fall of 1999 and 517 (45%) did not. The table breaks these numbers by admittance type. As shown, of the 455 new freshman-high school graduates, 63% returned for the fall 1999 semester (287) and 37% did not. Similar comparisons are obtainable for each admittance type. Note that additional combined numbers are provided for similar admittance types. For example, those students with admittance codes of freshman, new freshman-high school graduate, and freshman-regular admittance-GED were combined into a new group labeled total freshman.

The freshman category is an old code that was used in the past before greater clarification was established. Some students were still classified in this category. Note that there is a transient category, which includes 71 students. These students were allowed to return, and some did. Where admittance types are provided, one can remove the transient students if desired. For the overall percentage of students returning, when transients are excluded, 58% of students returned. The “other” category, for the purpose of this report, is a combination of a few less common admittance types. These include temporary high school graduates, temporary second-degree students, temporary admits, early admissions, and temporary transfers, which is the majority of these other students.

Summary

Of the new freshman-high school graduates, 63% returned; 37% did not.

Of the junior college transfers, 73% returned; 27% did not.

Of the senior college transfers, 63% returned; 37% did not.

Table 3

Table 3 examines the students by gender, within admittance type. As shown, of the male students, 50% returned for a second fall term and 50% did not (without transient students, 54% returned). As for the females, 58% returned and 42% did not (without transient students, 61% returned). While there appears to be a higher percentage of females returning, after examining the breakdowns by admittance types, the differences are more substantial in the transfer students category, where a higher percentage of females returned, than in the freshman students group, where similar return rates are found.

Summary

Male

Of the new freshman-high school graduates, 62% returned; 38% did not.

Of the junior college transfers, 64% returned; 36% did not.

Of the senior college transfers, 54% returned; 46% did not.

Female

Of the new freshman-high school graduates, 64% returned; 36% did not.

Of the junior college transfers, 77% returned; 23% did not.

Of the senior college transfers, 68% returned; 32% did not.

Table 3
Undergraduate Students Who Began AUM Fall 1998
Broken Down by Whether or Not They Attended Fall 1999 by Admittance Type by Gender

Admittance Type	Male				Female			
	Attended Fall 1999		Didn't Attend Fall 1999		Attended Fall 1999		Didn't Attend Fall 1999	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
N=1,150								
Freshman	1	100.0%	0	0.0%	3	75.0%	1	25.0%
New Freshman-HS Graduate	112	62.2%	68	37.8%	175	63.6%	100	36.4%
Freshman-Reg Adm-GED	2	25.0%	6	75.0%	5	62.5%	3	37.5%
Total Freshman	115	60.8%	74	39.2%	183	63.8%	104	36.2%
JC Transfer-2.00 or higher	29	64.4%	16	35.6%	73	76.8%	22	23.2%
Transfer from Senior College	26	54.2%	22	45.8%	69	67.6%	33	32.4%
Total Transfers	55	59.1%	38	40.9%	142	72.1%	55	27.9%
SpSt-JC Transfer less than 2.0	5	50.0%	5	50.0%	4	66.7%	2	33.3%
SpSt-Sen Transfer less than 2.0	16	45.7%	19	54.3%	25	53.2%	22	46.8%
Total Special Student Transfers	21	46.7%	24	53.3%	29	54.7%	24	45.3%
SpSt-Based on Decision Points	16	40.0%	24	60.0%	25	53.2%	22	46.8%
SpSt-No Test Scores (HS -3 yr)	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	100.0%	0	0.0%
SpSt-GED Certificate	0	0.0%	1	100.0%	1	100.0%	0	0.0%
SpSt-Home Schooling	1	50.0%	1	50.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
SpSt-No Test Scores (HS +3 yr)	1	100.0%	0	0.0%	1	33.3%	2	66.7%
SpSt-Temporary-Incomplete Info	3	75.0%	1	25.0%	2	50.0%	2	50.0%
Unclassified Undergraduate	0	0.0%	11	100.0%	1	5.6%	17	94.4%
Transient	0	0.0%	26	100.0%	4	8.9%	41	91.1%
Second UG Degree Admission	3	42.9%	4	57.1%	5	45.5%	6	54.5%
Other	15	41.7%	21	58.3%	9	32.1%	19	67.9%
Excluding Transient Students	230	50.5%	225	49.5%	403	58.0%	292	42.0%
		53.6%				61.4%		
								695



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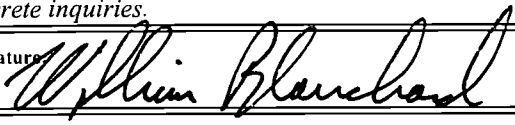
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